



10th January 2025

Headteachers update

Happy New Year! I trust that you had an amazing break and found time to relax amongst the chaos. It was great to return to work on Monday and see so many enthusiastic children ready to learn. I have tried to talk to as many as I can this week and it is amazing to hear what they all got up to.

As we move on with the academic year and enter 2025, I would first of all like to welcome Mrs Kathryn Rutter to the Belsay family, who will be working in Alder class on a Thursday and Friday. We are very lucky to have her and I know you will all make her feel welcome. Mrs Rutter has replaced Miss Cruse who left us at Christmas.

The start of this year could not have got any better after reading an article in the Northumberland Gazette. The article ranked all the schools in Northumberland based on the academic outcomes for last year and I am so proud to see that Belsay is ranked 3rd in the County! This is a huge credit to everyone involved in the school, not just the staff and pupils so thank you for your continued support and shared vision of making Belsay the best school possible. I always say we might be small but we are mighty. If you would like to read the article please click [here](#).

Looking ahead at this term we have an awful lot going on, not just striving for excellence academically but also through our personal development. We have our residential trip to Dukeshouse Wood for Years 3-5; trips linked to Made in North East Week and our Oak Class favourite... Shakespeare Performance at the Northern Stage in Newcastle. So much to look forward to and thankfully this term is long so we can hopefully fit it all in!

I would like to thank everyone who filled in the parental survey, sent out before Christmas. It was wonderful to see so many positive comments and the feedback is invaluable to the school but the staff in particular who provide your children with a wonderful education. We also really appreciate the constructive feedback as this helps us on our journey of trying to be as successful as possible.

Finally, Margaret Armstrong, our Chair of the Academy Committee has decided to step down from her role. On behalf of everyone at Belsay I can not thank Margaret enough for the hard work and dedication she has given to Belsay over her many years of association. Margaret has always had the best interest of the children and the progression of the school in all that she does and her support to me since I started has been invaluable!

Well done for getting through the first week back, a shock to all our systems. Have a great weekend and see you Monday, apparently it shouldn't be as cold next week!

Mr Shaw



Friday Flyer

Safeguarding

Belsay Primary School is committed to keeping all children safe. Our staff regularly participate in safeguarding training and are fully aware of how to keep our pupils safe and what signs to look out for. Our pupils know they can share any concerns and we have robust policies and procedures in place which underpin safeguarding. It is our paramount priority to keep all children healthy and safe.

Remember our Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) in school are **Mr Shaw and Miss Dixon**.

10 Top Tips on Supporting Children with SELF-REGULATION

Children need to learn to understand and recognise their emotions, while finding healthy ways to process them. Emotional self-regulation, however, depends heavily on age and development. While very young ones or children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) may find it particularly challenging to self-regulate, nurturing these important skills can be hugely beneficial. Here are ten top tips for supporting children with their self-regulation.

- #### 1. DESIGNATE A TRUSTED ADULT

It's vital that children feel safe and know that there's someone they can always go to for help if they need it. Schedule consistent times for the child to develop a relationship with this person – ideally through play and games – allowing trust to grow and ensuring that the child is more likely to come forward if anything is wrong, rather than hiding their emotions.
- #### 2. MEET CHILDREN HALFWAY

Unless you know where a child is developmentally and tailor your approach to their needs, you're less likely to have an impact. In particular, younger ones and children with SEND can struggle to self-regulate and instead rely on others to help them. We call this 'co-regulation'. Rather than offering strategies for self-regulation, it could be better to start co-regulating with a trusted adult first.
- #### 3. FACTOR IN THEIR BASIC NEEDS

Remember that for a child to develop emotional regulation skills, their basic needs must be met first. Children who are hungry, tired, cold and so on – as well as those who have experienced adverse childhood experiences – may struggle to self-regulate. Before you develop strategies with any child, make sure they feel safe, secure and comfortable in themselves.
- #### 4. REMAIN PATIENT

If a child is struggling with their emotions, it can often become difficult to stay calm. Remember that dysregulation is beyond their control, so a display of frustration or anger could negatively impact the situation. Instead, children need to be met with comfort and understanding to help them manage these problematic feelings.
- #### 5. BE 'A DYSREGULATION DETECTIVE'

While some children can tell you why they become dysregulated, many others can't. You could investigate potential triggers by observing the child and talking to their family. When the child becomes dysregulated, note down details like the time, what they're doing and who they're with – the trigger may be someone they sit near, an unmet sensory need or something else entirely. Once we identify some triggers, we can help to avoid or overcome them.
- #### 6. USE SUITABLE LITERATURE

There are some wonderful books that can help you teach self-regulation to children. Reading these with a child can be especially powerful. Take time to discuss the content, ask questions about what feelings the characters had, why they felt that way and what strategies helped them. It can also be useful to refer back to snippets of these books at appropriate moments.
- #### 7. TRY SENSORY RESOURCES

An overlap between sensory needs and emotional regulation is possible. Children may struggle to self-regulate if they're experiencing sensory overload (a noisy classroom, for example). Positive sensory input can help calm them down. Use resources such as weighted blankets and fibre-optic lights. Of course, what works for one child might not work for another – so it's important to offer a choice of resources to discover which they prefer.
- #### 8. NURTURE INDEPENDENCE

If you feel it's appropriate, let children try out these strategies alone. Always offer them a choice: they could listen to music when they're feeling stressed, for example, or they could write down their worries or draw something to represent how they feel. This may take time for the child to get used to, so be patient. Encourage them to share any helpful strategies with a trusted adult.
- #### 9. MODEL GENUINE FEELINGS

Children learn a lot just from watching grown-ups. Don't be afraid to show your own emotions and self-regulation strategies. While you'll obviously want to avoid sharing anything too personal with children, they should still see us experiencing and handling our own feelings. Tell them how you are feeling, then show them how to respond in a healthy manner.
- #### 10. FORMULATE A PLAN

As much as we try to prevent children from experiencing dysregulation, it's always wise to have an appropriate plan for when it does happen. Discuss this strategy with the child (if appropriate) and their family. The best approach for an individual child is often a bespoke one; it's hugely important to know in advance what might help and what could worsen the situation.



Attendance

As parents and carers we want to share our attendance figures because it is you who can make the big difference. Our children are entitled to a full and balanced education and at Belsay we feel we provide one of the best experiences possible.

Our current Whole School attendance is 92%. Our target for Whole School Attendance is 96%.

Class	Weekly attendance	Annual attendance
Willow	98.86	96.73
Maple	98.52	95.76
Alder	100	95.86
Oak	100	95.50

Days of school add up to lost learning						
Days in school	190	186	180	175	171	170
Percentage attendance	100%	98%	95%	92%	90%	<90%
	Excellent	Excellent	Good	Caution	Cause for concern	Serious concern

Absence Procedures if your child is ill, please keep them at home until they are well enough to return to school. Please notify us by phone call or email before 9.15am if your child is to be absent, and continue to inform us on a daily basis if they continue to be ill.

We have a continual focus on attendance and punctuality and this is of the utmost importance in your child's education. Please remember that our school gate closes at 8.55am as this is when our lessons begin. Anyone arriving after this time is classed as late and will miss valuable learning opportunities which take place immediately after registration, such as phonics.



Classroom updates - Willow Class

Happy New Year to everyone in Team Willow! After speaking to the children it is clear to see and hear that they have had a fantastic Christmas break and made lots of wonderful memories with their families, which is exactly what Christmas is all about.

We have made a great start to the new term and what better way to do it than to be outside exploring in the snow. We got our waterproofs and wellies on and went outside with the powder paint and paintbrushes. It was a lot of fun and we loved mixing the colours together to create new colours. The cold weather never stops us in Willow class!



We have been thinking about our goals for the year ahead. We have thought about what we would like to achieve. Some of us have set ourselves the challenge to learn to ride a bike without stabilisers, to learn to zip up our coats by ourselves and to make sure we show everyone we are the best class in the school. Some great goals and I am looking forward to supporting the children to achieve them.

This week we have introduced 'let's make a fuss'. This is when we will focus on keywords that we want the children to remember. This week the focus has been on the words target, achievement and celebration as we think about the Christmas break and the new year that is waiting for us. It would be good if you could ask the children to help you understand 'let's make a fuss'. We are using the image of a lightbulb to help us to identify when we need to make a fuss.



A big well done to everyone for a successful first week back. It can often be hard to settle back into school once we have had a break, but I am so proud of everyone in Willow class for how quickly they have settled back into routine. This requires support from home as well so thank you to all of you for your support. Have a lovely weekend!

Miss Houghton



Classroom updates - Maple Class

Maple Class have had a fantastic first week back to start the New Year! Everyone settled straight back into routine and enjoyed sharing what they had been up to over the Christmas holidays. We began our study of the new class text *The Tin Forest* in English, working hard to make predictions and ask questions about the characters and setting before reading the story together. In Maths, Year 1 enjoyed exploring repeated patterns outdoors whilst Year 2 studied symmetrical shapes. In Science, we learned about the seven life processes and went on a winter walk around the school site to classify things in our environment that are living, dead or have never been alive.



Miss Dixon



Classroom updates - Alder Class



Happy new year to you all, we hope you had a lovely break and managed to spend some quality time with family and friends. It was lovely to welcome everyone back for the start of a new term.

In Maths this week we have completed a very short block all about area, my goodness they have been amazing! We discussed what area could be in Monday's Maths lesson and couldn't quite say what it was, they are now area experts! We have seen 110% effort and it has paid off. One highlight from this week's learning was to see the imaginative 'shed' designs the children created.

English has seen the introduction of a new text. 'The One and Only Ivan' has been a huge hit. So far in the story we have been introduced to some key characters. There is of course Ivan the gorilla, an elephant named Stella, a dog called Bob, and so on. Our writing task has been to describe Ivan's

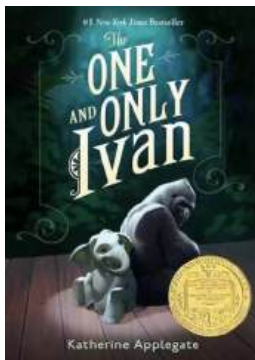


Friday Flyer

surroundings from his point of view. Over the next few weeks we will write non-chronological reports, we will have gorilla experts by half term!

In Art we looked at some controversial and influential sculptures and illustrations. We were able to see the real message each artist wanted to portray. We also did some gorilla sketching. Next week we will talk about how we can use different shades of the same colour to give depth to our drawings, we will also look at the technique of showing light and dark in our artwork, thinking about where the light source would be coming from. The messy part of the project will come towards the end of the unit, as we use poster paints for our media and potatoes as our tools.

It has been a real pleasure welcoming Mrs Rutter to Team Alder, she has been a huge hit and we look forward to working together this year.



Mrs Aynsley and Mrs Rutter



Classroom updates - Oak Class

Those Christmas holidays seem an awfully long time ago up here in Upper Key Stage 2. After what was clearly a brilliant break for our Year 5 and 6 children, they have thrown themselves back into work with an absolutely brilliant attitude.

And it really has been full speed ahead. We have dived straight into our Shakespeare studies, gearing up for our Northern Stage performance of *Much Ado About Nothing*. Our first piece of writing will be a Play Script so we have been beavering away, identifying features of them and finding them in our own scripts. With the provisional parts already given out, there have already been some excellent read-throughs and early rehearsals. It seems like we are in for another cracker of a performance on the night.

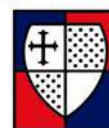
Maths function work continues to develop some brilliant fluency, this term focussing on formal written methods. Our PSHE unit on "Personal Identity" kicked off with some very mature and gripping conversations. History with the "Ancient Maya" this half term began with some work on timelines and map work, and we had a right old push and shove in our first "Forces" lesson in Science.

"Much Ado?" More like "Much ***TO*** do!"

Have a great weekend Team Oak and we will see you all on Monday!



Mr. McLeod



Friday Flyer

Dates for your Diary

Date	Time	
24th January	All day	Kaleidoscope Workshop Day at Newcastle University for selected students
11th February	All day	Safer Internet Day
21st February	3.15PM	School closes for half term
3rd March	All day	Teacher training day
4th March	8.45am	School reopens for all children
12th March	All day	Shakespeare performance
19th-21st March	All day	Dukeshouse residential for Year 3-5
24th-28th March	8.45-8.55am 3.15-3.45pm	Scholastic Book fair
24-28th March	All day	Made in the North East week
11th April	3.15PM	School closes for half term
28th April	8.45am	School reopens for all children

Events could be subject to change and will be communicated if required